DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 474 168 SO 034 551

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TITLE	Federalism, Agenda Setting, and the Dynamics of Federal Education Policy.
PUB DATE	2002-00-00
NOTE	30p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association (Boston, MA, August 29-September 1, 2002).
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research (143) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Agenda Setting; *Educational Policy; Educational Research; Elementary Secondary Education; *Federal Government; *Federalism; *Government Role; Interviews
IDENTIFIERS	Local Control; Theory Development

ABSTRACT

This paper is part of a larger project on agenda setting in the U.S. federal system and the development of the federal education agenda since 1965. Two questions motivate the paper, one theoretical and the other empirical: (1) how does federalism affect the federal agenda?; and (2) what explains the development of federal involvement in K-12 education policy since the passage of the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act? The paper links concepts from the literature on agenda setting and federalism to develop a theory to explain how policy entrepreneurs across levels of government interact and affect each other's agendas. The analysis examines how in the U.S., a nation historically wedded to local control of education, the federal government has significantly expanded its role in the nation's schools. Data in the paper came from three main sources: (1) Digest of Education Statistics; (2) public laws databases of the Policy Agenda Project at the University of Washington (Seattle, Washington); and (3) over 60 semi-structured elite interviews with members of the education policy community in Washington, DC. Includes 61 notes, five figures, and two tables. Contains 45 references. (BT)

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ED 474 168

Federalism, Agenda Setting, and the Dynamics of Federal Education Policy

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Presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Boston, MA, August 29 – September 1, 2002. Thanks to John Witte, Don Kettl, John Coleman, Patty Strach, Travis Ridout, members of the Research Seminar on Voting and Politics at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and especially my interview respondents who, without exception, offered their time both generously and enthusiastically. For financial support I thank the Graduate School and Graduate Student Council at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, the Dirksen Congressional Center, Jeff Henig and the Department of Political Science at the George Washington University, and the American Political Science Association.

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During the last forty years, and since 1980 in particular, the federal education agenda has expanded in two primary ways. First, elected officials have become more attentive to the nation's schools in their public statements and formal meetings. Second, federal policy concerning America's system of elementary and secondary education has continued to reach farther and deeper into the core functions of the nation's schools. Consider the refashioning in 2001 of the nation's main K-12 education law, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Reauthorized and named the No Child Left Behind Act, the ESEA now requires all states (as of the 2005-06 school year) to administer annual tests in reading and math in grades 3 through 8. All new teachers hired with federal Title I money must be highly qualified, and by 2005-06 all states must employ highly qualified teachers in core subjects.[1] If a school's performance dips below a level set by the state, federal law requires the local district to offer children from that school the option to attend another public school, and the district must provide transportation to accommodate those requests.

In this paper I examine how the federal government has expanded its reach into the nation's schools even though education remains primarily a state and local function in the United States. In so doing, this study answers two questions, one theoretical and the other empirical. First, how does federalism affect the federal agenda? And second, what explains the development of federal involvement in K-12 education policy since the passage in 1965 of the first Elementary and Secondary Education Act? Overall, the paper links concepts from the literatures on agenda setting and federalism to develop a theory that explains how policy entrepreneurs across levels government interact and affect one another's agendas.

This paper is part of a larger project on agenda setting in the American federal system and the development of the federal education agenda since 1965. That broader effort traces two dependent variables over this time: federal interest and involvement in K-12 education. (I define these two concepts shortly.) In the interest of space, this paper focuses on involvement, and explores it from many different angles. The data come from three main sources: (1) the *Digest of Education Statistics*, published annually by the National Center for Education Statistics; (2) the public laws databases of the Policy Agendas Project at the University of Washington; and (3) over 60 semi-structured elite interviews with members of the education policy community in Washington, DC.

Conceptual Building Blocks

Analysts and policymakers typically name two events when pinpointing the origins of the recently expanded federal role in K-12 education. Both are examples of what agenda setting scholars might call focusing events, crises, or punctuations.[2] The first is the publication of the National Commission on Excellence in Education's (NCEE) 1983 report, *A Nation at Risk*. Among other things, that report chastised the United States for allowing its educational system to deteriorate, which created opportunities for international economic competitors to pass the nation by. The second event is the 1989 national education summit in Charlottesville, Virginia, where President George H. W. Bush convened the nation's 50 governors to consider the state of the

[1] The definition of "highly qualified" varies by position and grade level, but typically involves requirements that combine different levels of college preparation and field-specific training in subject areas.
[2] Kingdon (1995, pp. 94-100); Baumgartner and Jones (1993, pp. 18-21).

nation's schools. Both of these events highlighted America's educational shortcomings, identified possible remedies, and, as most accounts go, propelled the nation onto accelerated reform trajectories.

Without question, these two events are critical for understanding the nation's educational history. I will argue later that both are perhaps more important, though, for reasons that have received less attention. By themselves, *A Nation at Risk* and Charlottesville cannot explain the growth of federal involvement in the nation's schools in light of two other features of education policymaking in the United States. First is the belief among most Americans, past and present, that education is properly the function of state and local governments. And second, even if the federal government wanted to assert itself more strongly in the nation's schools, it lacks a well-staffed and funded bureaucratic apparatus do so. To simply claim that the NCEE's report or the national education summit overcame both of these significant barriers to a deeper federal role leaves too much unanswered. If citizens believe in a limited federal role, and if the federal government lacks the capacity to reform American classrooms, how precisely has it extended its reach? Focusing primarily on the events of 1983 and 1989 might situate in time changes in federal policy, but that does not specify the mechanisms that have allowed the federal education agenda to expand like it has. Identifying those mechanisms is one goal of this work. In so doing, I use the case of education to relate scholarship on federalism and agenda setting, and integrate them in a theory of how agendas change.

Federalism and Agenda Setting

Federalism is often considered a system of government that frustrates rather than promotes policy action.[3] This idea was central to the arguments that James Madison and other founders offered about the nature of the government they designed in the U.S. Constitution. In Madison's view, dividing control between the states and Washington, DC would prevent any one elected official or small group at one level from consolidating power. As long as leadership of the nation's politics and policymaking remained distributed this way, the nation's citizens could rest assured that tyrants would not enact policy that trampled on their rights. This was the advantage of what Madison, in *Federalist No. 51,* called the nation's "compound republic."

But focusing on these arresting tendencies in the system understates the ways that the compound republic can also facilitate policy action. That is the relatively understudied but critically important feature of federalism that this paper addresses. Scholars have generally missed the chance to consider this possibility and to explore in much depth how American federalism creates opportunities for elected officials across levels of government to make good policy and enjoy political success. How they leverage the opportunities built into the structure of the nation's federal system to achieve their stated or tacit goals is a very different way to consider dynamics in America's compound republic.[4] Other approaches that portray federalism in zero-sum terms as competition between levels of government, or as a clock-like machine with

[3] Anton (1989, p. 8). Derthick (2001, p. 39) summarizes this view: "Fragmentation of authority in the federal system is often portrayed, at least in academic literature, as a severe handicap to the federal government's pursuit of its goals."

[4] Peterson (1995, p. 16) alludes to this idea when he notes that according to legislative theories of federalism, "Legislators at all levels of government will seek to distribute governmental benefits for which they can claim credit and, if at all possible, will shift governmental burdens to other levels of the federal system."

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cyclical rhythm where ascendance at one level signals decline the another, miss the ways that federalism can enable actors at all levels of government simultaneously.[5]

Similarly, studies of agenda setting have largely overlooked the role that state officials and other sub-national actors can play in setting the federal agenda. For example, Light's study of the president's agenda does not identify the states as a possible source of ideas.[6] Kingdon barely mentions them in the original (1984) version of his classic study.[7] In their book on agendas and national policy change, Baumgartner and Jones do include a chapter on the nation's federal system. They tend to emphasize a zero-sum view of federalism in which federal officials, typically through grant-giving, can change the priorities of state and local governments. Baumgartner and Jones also address federalism implicitly throughout their book when they argue that policy entrepreneurs tend to shop for new venues across the federal system primarily when they experience defeat at one level of government. The authors do not consider in any detail, though, the possibility that federal officials might seek advantages at another level not as an alternative for but as a complement to acting in their own.[8]

Scholars of agenda setting do agree that more studies should examine how federalism affects agenda setting processes.[9] In the update to his original seminal work, Kingdon noted that this was needed, but would not be easy given that "federalism complicates an analysis of agenda-setting, because there are multiple agendas possible for the same subject matter at a given time."[10] This is a crucial point that motivates this study. In these pages I accept Kingdon's implicit challenge to identify mechanisms that drive agenda setting in the complicated arena of federalism where American policymakers live and breathe. The literature on how feedback mechanisms, policy entrepreneurs, and multiple venues for action affect agenda setting are particularly relevant to this task.

Feedbacks, Entrepreneurs, and Venues

Through feedbacks, activities at one level of government can influence political and policy agendas in others. Scholars have generally characterized these feedback processes in two ways.[11] Positive feedback accentuates and accelerates trends that are already in motion. These are sometimes called bandwagon effects, as when an idea becomes popular and spreads. The literature on the diffusion of policy innovations across state boundaries provides numerous illustrations of this idea.[12] Conversely, negative feedback processes promote stability. To borrow examples from Baumgartner and Jones, these work much like a thermostat that triggers a

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[5] Chubb (1985); Nathan (1990); Walker (1995, Chapter 11).
[6] Light (1999).
[7] Kingdon (1995).
[8] See Baumgartner and Jones (1993, Chapter 11). While the top-down view is pervasive in this chapter, the authors do recognize the potential for a more fluid set of relationships between the federal government and the states on p. 232, "Rather than frustrating attempts at national policy change, the multiple venues of the states and the federal government sometimes coalesce into a single system of positive-feedback, each encouraging the other to enact stronger reforms than might otherwise occur."
[9] Examples include Walker (1977, p. 424) and Nelson (1984, p. ix).
[10] Kingdon (1995, pp. 229-30).
[11] Baumgartner and Jones (1993); Baumgartner and Jones (2002).
[12] Walker (1969); Gray (1973). See Mintrom and Vergari (1998) for an education example.

building's furnace when a room drops below a specified temperature, or when automatic stabilizers in social services budgets react to rising unemployment rates.[13]

In addition to these accelerating or stabilizing effects, feedback processes can influence politics and policy in a couple of other ways.[14] First, new policies can increase the capacity of government bureaucrats and elected officials to act in the future. In other words, one of the unintended consequences of lawmaking is that sometimes public officials (or activists) use laws in different ways than their authors intended. Enterprising politicians can use old laws in new ways, or capitalize on new statutes to extend their reach in the same or a related policy area. That can build momentum for a policy trend already in motion (positive feedback), slow down a trend (negative feedback), or push the government's agenda in a new direction altogether. For example, critics of federal education policy often berate the bureaucratic red tape that federal programs impose on state departments of education and local schools. Notwithstanding the nugget of truth in this criticism, while rules can sometimes be binding or contradictory, more positively, they can help to build institutional structures at the state and local level—trained staff, monitoring capacity—that produce policy benefits in other ways.

How policy feedbacks foster change or stability often depends on policy entrepreneurs who help to set the policy agendas of government. Sometimes these individuals are elected politicians, government employees, or workers in the idea communities of think tanks, universities, and interest groups.[15] In Kingdon's model of agenda change (and in the model I will present in the next section), these entrepreneurs play a key role. The critical linking of problems, policies, and politics, which Kingdon argues is required for policy change, does not occur by chance, but when "entrepreneurs perform the function for the system of coupling the previously separate streams."[16] These entrepreneurs are not mere bystanders, but fight to push their ideas onto the agenda, or defend their turf against other rising concerns.

Because the American federal system is comprised of many governments and hundreds of agencies at the state and federal levels, these entrepreneurs have numerous institutional venues where they can agitate for their interests. If they find doors closed in one place, they can frequently open them elsewhere.[17] Different venues provide groups with varying levels of access. This can confer political clout to stakeholders in one location who may hardly be visible in other places. The availability of multiple venues has become more significant over the last thirty to forty years as different levels of government have become more interdependent across policy functions.[18]

It is unclear how these ties between multiple venues across the American federal system help to set the federal agenda. This is partly because federalism scholars have tended to focus on the system's centralizing tendencies and reform efforts that have occurred since the 1960s.[19]

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[13] Baumgartner and Jones (2002, pp. 8-23).
[14] Skocpol (1994, p. 204).
[15] Walker (1977); Polsby (1984, p. 171); Smith (1991).
[16] Kingdon (1995, p. 182).
[17] Baumgartner and Jones (1993, pp. 31-5); Burns (1994); Gray and Lowery (2000).
[18] (Chubb, 1985 #141, p. 994}; Fesler and Kettl (1996, p. 308).
[19] Nathan (1990); Walker (1995); Conlan (1998).

Admittedly, it is hard to dispute that there has been a secular trend toward greater centralization during the last four decades.[20] That much is clear. However, if the American federal system tends toward centralization, focusing on that feature ignores much of its variation. It is important to remember, for example, that states have become more professional and capable policy actors during the same period that the gravitational pull toward Washington, DC has increased. Explicitly recognizing these growing state capabilities can provide new insights into how activity in different policy venues can affect the federal agenda, and, even more generally, agendas at other levels of government, too.[21]

Taking this approach also aligns well with what Baumgartner and Jones identify as three important trends in the American policy system since World War II: changes in the interest group environment, adjustments in the structures of Congressional behavior, and changing relations among governments in the nation's federal system.[22] To those, one could easily add the development and professionalization of states as policy actors. That change is central to the framework that I offer next. Indeed, it is likely that one of the reasons why the character of the federal system has changed so much is because states have improved their ability to make policy in a serious way, not simply because the federal government has asserted its influence.

Setting the Agenda in a Federal System

This paper's theoretical argument is that the level of interest and involvement that a government demonstrates in a policy area is a function of three things: its license to act and its capacity to act in that policy area, and the advocacy of an entrepreneur. Figure 1 presents this model. Interest and involvement, the dependent variables in the broader study of which this paper is a part, are straightforward concepts. Interest refers to the rhetorical commitment that government officials demonstrate in a policy area. The number of legislative hearings devoted to a certain policy, and the policy's presence in major speeches, party platforms, and political campaigns all capture different aspects of this idea. Involvement, the focus of this paper, refers to policy production. A government is involved in a policy area if it makes laws, issues regulations, and appropriates funds to address it in some way. Unlike simply highlighting an issue in speeches or campaign ads, for example, involvement demonstrates that a government has decided to act.[23]

Figure 1 about here

The first independent variable, license, refers to the strength of the arguments available to justify government action.[24] Clearly, some arguments are more persuasive than others. Where, then, do government officials find the license that they need to support their proposals? Four main sources exist. First, and most generally, license resides in the wells of political capital that politicians cultivate, conserve, and spend down at important moments in time. Second are the frames that leaders impose on issues, which link them to other concerns, as when state

[20] Derthick (2001, Chapter 10).
[21] Other work that considers this variation, and focuses on the ways that states and the federal government influence one another includes Posner (1998), Beamer (1999), and Gormley (2001).
[22] Baumgartner and Jones (1993, p. 173).
[23] The colloquialism "actions speak louder than words" captures this distinction between interest and involvement.
[24] This parallels the arguments of Stone (1989) and Polsby (1984).

administrative responsibilities (distributing drivers' licenses) become connected to national security (fighting international terrorism). A third way to justify action is to draw on constitutional or statutory language that grants to a certain level of government (or branch) control over a policy area. When the law is explicit, it is relatively easier to support action than when it is vague or silent.[25] A final source of license is a track record of past lawmaking that has withstood popular or court challenge over time. If a government has acted previously without garnering serious criticism, it is not hard to argue that this past experience justifies future efforts along the same, or a similar, path.

If license justifies action, it by no means guarantees that policymakers will be able to act, and to act effectively. That is where the second independent variable, capacity, enters the argument. This concept refers to the ability to act once the decision to act has been made. Capacity exists in the form of financial resources, the coherence and presence of bureaucratic structures such as regulatory agencies of government, and the knowledge, experience, and expertise of government personnel.

Assuming he sees some tangible benefit for doing so, a federal policy entrepreneur is most likely to promote government interest and involvement in a policy area when the government has high license and high capacity to act. Where both license and capacity are weak, encouraging government interest and involvement is not impossible, but extremely unlikely. More interesting combinations occur when either license or capacity are low. If both are necessary to foster interest and involvement, does a federal shortage in one stop an entrepreneur in his tracks?

When an enterprising entrepreneur surveys his options more broadly he finds that low license or capacity might not stifle his efforts. In a federal system, creative federal policymakers can borrow license or capacity from other levels of government to help achieve their own objectives. Figure 2 presents a scenario where federal license is high and capacity is low, which has moved federal entrepreneurs to borrow capacity from the states. In education policy, for example, lacking the capacity to reform the nation's schools on their own, federal officials may develop laws that build on state efforts. In the process they rely on, or borrow, state capacity, which also allows them to assert their own interests and priorities. In so doing, they can build a federal education agenda and nudge the states in particular directions, something they could not have accomplished alone from their perch in Washington without substantial new investments of political and financial resources.

This process, called "borrowing strength" in the pages that follow, also can apply to state officials. For example, a governor might possess low license to justify a particular reform agenda. That may prevent her from persuading large numbers of constituents and other state officials to endorse her idea. However, the governor's task is less onerous if federal officials, in particular the president and his advisers using the bully pulpit, have charted a similar course for the entire nation. A president investing political capital like this becomes a valuable resource for

[25] That does not necessarily mean that the interpretations of statutes or state and federal constitutions are beyond debate. Far from it, as the post-1960 history of the commerce clause of the U.S. Constitution demonstrates. See Anton (1989, pp. 8-10) for discussion of this ambiguity.

an enterprising governor attempting to develop license to expand her own agenda. Over time, as entrepreneurs in Washington, DC and the states borrow strength from one another they can shape the levels of interest and involvement that their governments demonstrate in different policy areas, or multiple dimensions within a specific policy domain. Through this process the American federal system becomes a source of positive feedback because it helps to expand government agendas.

Figure 2 about here

Policymakers may also provoke negative feedback processes when officials in one level of government react negatively or cautiously to others' attempts to borrow license or capacity. That is because borrowing strength is neither easy nor without cost. Federal officials cannot simply copy the arguments from state venues to develop federal license in a related policy area. They must adapt. Similarly, and perhaps more challenging, is that federal officials need to assess accurately the strengths that states possess. Overestimating state capabilities, and thus attempting to borrow capacity that does not actually exist, can generate federal policies that overburden state governments and distort their priorities. Not only does that produce outcries from disgruntled citizens and state officials, it undercuts the effectiveness of federal policy and saps momentum from reform. It can also have devastating political consequences for the federal officials who hoped to make good policy and score political points by seeking this leverage in the first place.

The arguments in this section imply that there exist multidirectional relationships between license, capacity, interest, and involvement. For example, if a track record of lawmaking provides a government with relatively high license, in part it also measures its current level of involvement. Similarly, government appropriations to support a policy captures some degree of its involvement at one point, but might also create subsequent capacity.

With other potential possibilities, that formulation can become complicated, but it is also theoretically tractable and advantageous for a couple of reasons. First, simply because the policymaking process is not very tidy does not mean that it is impossible to attempt general theoretical statements about how government agendas take shape. If keeping track of the variables may prove challenging, that does not mean that a middle-range theory to describe these processes must necessarily be inelegant or muddled. Second, and perhaps more important, considering the model in this section across time highlights the key role that feedback loops can play in the policy process. Put another way, a law that results from one set of events at one point may itself cause subsequent activity that emerges a few years later. Specifying that dynamic is tractable as long as one remains mindful of the timing and sequencing of events.[26]

The next major section applies this model of agenda formation to federal involvement in education policy since 1965. It traces movements in federal education spending, analyzes the production of public laws addressing education, and examines in detail the evolution of Title I of the ESEA. Overall, the evidence reveals how fluid back-and-forth interactions between

[26] On the importance of timing, feedbacks, and how effects can become causes see Orren and Skowronek (1994) and Pierson (2000).

Washington, DC and the states have guided the development of federal education policy during the last forty years. My theoretical approach based on borrowing strength also shows how previous attempts to explain the federal agenda's shape that attribute much weight to *A Nation at Risk* and the Charlottesville summit have underplayed important elements of those events, and consequently misread much of their impact.

Describing and Explaining Federal Involvement in K-12 Education

Because this analysis focuses on events after 1965, this section begins by describing the baseline levels of license and capacity to act in K-12 education that the federal government possessed when the first ESEA became law.

Throughout American history, the federal presence in education has been justified when it served national goals or when the nation's basic principles or physical safety were perceived at risk.[27] The latter rationale spurred passage of the National Defense Education Act in 1958. Guaranteeing equality of opportunity was the core value that the ESEA addressed in 1965. Lyndon Johnson saw the ESEA as a key component of his War on Poverty, which attempted to equalize educational and thus economic opportunities for the nation's poorest citizens. Former Johnson adviser Samuel Halperin recalled that promoting educational justice, which was intimately tied to divisive questions about racial equality, was central to this expanded federal role.[28] Even though the Johnson team pushed ahead aggressively with the proposed ESEA—fewer than five months transpired between its drafting and enactment—the president did recognize that it would not transform the federal government into a co-equal educational partner of state and local governments. Caveats in Title VI of the new law clarified how the federal role was necessarily limited and would not touch core functions of the nation's schools, such as the scope of the curriculum.[29]

What about the capacity of the federal government to act on this mission? Overall it was quite low. Other than mustering an increased stream of federal dollars, which Johnson did, the federal government possessed little institutional knowledge and a relatively small Office of Education in 1965. There was much guess-work in deciding what levers the federal government might pull to assert its influence and promote educational equity. Halperin, again, noted this by stating that one of the main original purposes of the ESEA was simply "to get federal aid started." It was also designed to jump start greater state efforts in education. That was the explicit goal of Title V, which provided money for states to develop their own educational infrastructure. This will become an important element in subsequent pages and will reveal some of the ways that fluid interactions, rather than simply federal command-and-control, have affected the education agendas of both the federal government and the states.

Starting from that baseline in 1965, federal license and capacity to act in education have grown, though not at a constant rate. Those changes and the process of borrowing strength have increased federal involvement in the nation's schools. That said, however, there has also been

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[27] Interestingly, federal education policy has often been more about these topics than with education, per se.
[28] Interview with Samuel Halperin.
[29] P.L. 89-10, Title VI, Sec. 604.

some continuity in the federal role across time. This variation and stability are especially evident in the area of federal education spending.

Spending

Looking at the federal contribution to revenues devoted to K-12 education shows one of the most stable trends in American policymaking since the 1960s. Figure 3 reveals that as a percentage of revenues, the federal commitment to K-12 education has remained essentially flat. While there was a visible jump during the mid-1960s from approximately 4.5 to 8 percent, federal spending by no means continued along an increasing trajectory. In fact, after hovering between 8 and 10 percent for the latter half of the 1960s and all of the 1970s, the federal proportion actually dropped to between 6 and 7 percent, where it has remained ever since.

Notice, however, the shifting balance between state and local governments that is also present in this figure. Owing largely to the education finance reforms of the 1970s, states began to increase their share of education funding and eventually pulled even with local governments in the 1980s. That is an important part of Figure 3 because it shows when states became more assertive players in financing their public school systems.

Figure 3 about here

The essentially constant pattern of federal spending in Figure 3 does mask two underlying sources of variation that are interesting to note. The first is presented in Figure 4, which plots the amount of federal spending in real dollars from 1939 through 1998. From this perspective, the jump that occurred with the first ESEA appears quite significant. Federal spending more than doubled in real dollars between 1963-64 ($2.9 billion), the full school year before Lyndon Johnson signed the first Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and 1965-66 ($6.3 billion), the first academic period that benefited from this increased federal largesse. Real spending continued to increase after that, though at a slower pace. It reached a peak in 1978-79, and then declined sharply after cutbacks and program consolidations during Ronald Reagan's first term. The decline was short-lived, however, and after the 1983-84 school year real spending began to increase once again, albeit quite slowly. A steeper upward trajectory returned in the latter half of the 1990s, however, and by 1997-98, as measured in real dollars, federal education spending grew to its largest amount ever, approximately $13.7 billion.

At least in financial terms, the trend in Figure 4 is instructive because it undercuts claims that *A Nation at Risk* moved the federal government into a policy leadership role in education. Certainly the report significantly enhanced the federal bully pulpit and promoted greater rhetoric about education. In the language of the theoretical model presented in Figure 1, the federal government possessed higher license to act after the report's release. However, the relatively stagnant levels of federal education spending during the Reagan era illustrates how policy entrepreneurs are critical players in the agenda setting process. Given the burst of attention that *A Nation at Risk* garnered, no doubt it would have been possible to increase federal involvement during the 1980s. That was simply not a Reagan priority, despite arguments for expanding the federal role that Secretary of Education Terrell Bell articulated.[30]

[30] Bell (1988, Chapter 11 and 12).

Figure 4 about here

A second source of variation is that federal spending has varied across the nation's 50 states. Measured as the percentage of K-12 revenues within a state, some have relied more heavily on federal dollars than others. Table 1 compares two periods to illustrate this: the 1967-68 and 1996-97 school years. The first column shows that in the 1967-68 academic period, 25 states received between 5 and 9.9 percent of their revenues for K-12 education from the federal government. That same year, the federal contribution made up between 10 and 14.9 percent in 14 states, and 15 percent or greater in 10 others. Three states, Mississippi (22.1 percent), Alaska (21.6) and Alabama (20.2), relied on the federal government for over one fifth of their education revenues. Even though variation persisted, by 1996-97 no state received more than 15 percent of its K-12 revenues from the federal government. The majority, 36 states, continued in the 5 to 9.9 percent range, with Mississippi (14.0 percent) remaining the top recipient.

This reveals broadly how the federal government has attempted to address needs in the nation's 50 states, which in practical terms has produced more education dollars for some states than others. During the 1960s, federal money fostered capacity at the local and state levels, through Title I and Title V of the ESEA especially. This produced positive feedback a generation later when federal policy makers would rely on state capacity to expand the federal education agenda.

Table 1 about here

Public Laws

Tracing the production of education laws is another way to gauge federal involvement. To analyze trends in federal lawmaking, I relied on the Agendas Project database of Public Laws. Laws were coded as relevant to K-12 education if it exclusively affected that level, or if it affected multiple areas of education but included K-12 schooling as a co-equal or major component.

Even though this provides a reasonable measure, there are features of this counting technique that lead it to understate federal involvement. First, this approach omits education provisions present in omnibus legislation. This is especially worth noting given the increasing trend toward omnibus bills that has occurred since World War II, and 1980 in particular.[31] A second issue is that this counting approach also skips education provisions attached via amendments to bills addressing other subjects.[32] Consequently, without scanning the complete text of all omnibus legislation and amendments to all other non-education measures (both Herculean tasks given the sweep of time considered here) this counting method likely produces a

[31] Krutz (2002, p. 220) concludes in his analysis of this trend toward omnibus legislation: "In sum, the congressional currency has changed from large numbers of small statutes to fewer but much larger public laws."
[32] A recent example of this is federal impact aid. This program is part of the ESEA and provides funds to local school districts that face financial challenges due to the presence of nearby federal facilities and Indian reservations, which these districts cannot tax. When members of Congress failed to complete a wholesale renewal of the ESEA in 2000, they compromised and did reauthorize the Impact Aid Program specifically by inserting it as an amendment in that year's defense authorization bill.

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conservative estimate of federal involvement. The analysis is useful nonetheless, especially when combined with anecdotal evidence that reveals important nuances in the overall trend.

Panel A of Figure 5 provides an initial look at these federal laws. The 3-year moving average shows a relatively steady and slightly downward sloping trend from the mid-1950s to 1981. A burst in the 1980s follows, which peaks at 23 public laws in 1986. An overall decline ensues through the late 1990s.

A closer look reveals what appears more like a burst of federal interest, rather than involvement, during the 1980s. Panels B and C, which disaggregate Panel A into commemorative and non-commemorative laws, clarify the trend. Commemorative laws declare that a specific year or month is somehow special. Conversely, non-commemorative laws carry substantive weight and the potential for more direct influence on educational practice.

Over time there appears to no systematic trend in the number of non-commemorative laws. If anything, the 3-year moving average declines slightly from the mid-1950s to the early 1980s, and then increases during that decade and the early 1990s before declining again. The plot of commemorative laws is quite different; essentially all of them passed between 1980 and 1993. In 1986 alone, 15 pieces of commemorative legislation became law. Those included P.L. 99-480, which designated 1986 as the National Year of the Teacher, and P.L. 99-259, proclaiming March 1986 to be Music in Our Schools Month. Overall, Figure 5 shows that much of the federal leadership in the 1980s attributed to *A Nation at Risk* was largely due to an expanded bully pulpit, not the production of substantive policy.

However, Figure 5 also challenges my central thesis that federal involvement in education has increased since 1965. If the pattern is so erratic, what sustains that core claim? Two ways to reconcile this figure with my overall argument are to study the scope of certain important laws, and to examine up-close some of the substantive changes in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, something that a count of public laws cannot capture. The following subsection explores in more detail changes in Title I of the ESEA. For now, consider these illustrations that demonstrate growing federal involvement in the substance of American schooling.

Figure 5 about here

Since 1950, the federal government has produced many education laws to please narrow interests. In nearly every year since 1950, laws have materialized similar to P.L. 84-30, which authorized the Vineland School District (California) to use certain federal lands. Federal involvement has consistently promoted student nutrition through the free and reduced cost milk, breakfast, and school lunch programs. Also, over time federal laws have addressed the education of Native Americans and the nation's disabled students to promote educational equity.

Laws fostering the development of curriculum and teaching methods in particular subject areas appeared periodically from the 1950s through the 1980s. Examples include the National Defense Education Act of 1958 (P.L. 85-864), which supported math, science, and foreign language instruction at all levels; P.L. 91-516 (1970), which focused on environmental

education; and P.L. 98-377 (1984), which appeared after *A Nation at Risk* and authorized funds to upgrade instruction in math, science, technology, and foreign languages across all levels of the nation's educational system. The latter is an exception to the otherwise symbolic or hands-off nature of federal education policy during most of the 1980s.

Federal involvement demonstrates no strong and consistent interest in broad-based educational reform until the 1990s. During that decade, laws were enacted that established a National Commission on a Longer School Year (1991, P.L. 102-110); extended the National Commission on Time and Learning (1992, P.L. 102-359); established a national framework to link school and work (1994, P.L. 103-239); codified national education goals and aimed to improve learning and teaching through a national framework for education reform (1994, P.L. 103-227); amended previous federal efforts to support charter schools, which had appeared in the 1994 ESEA, by passing a specific law to improve and expand federal support for this reform model (1998, 105-278); and provided all states with new flexibility as they implemented federal education law and pursued their own reform efforts (1999, P.L. 106-25). In short, substantive federal involvement in the nation's schools has increased, notwithstanding the erratic pattern in Panel C of Figure 5.

One way to see how this increased federal involvement in the 1990s reflects the process of borrowing strength is to consider simultaneously federal and state efforts. A survey of state education reforms during the 1970s and 1980s reveals much activity in all areas that federal law began to address in great detail in the 1990s (and to a lesser extent the late 1980s). After securing greater financial control over their school systems, many state leaders pushed ahead with a flurry of initiatives in testing, curriculum development, standards and requirements, and teaching.[33] Additionally, governors' arguments during the 1970s that linked their states' economic development to strong education systems became more persuasive after the release of *A Nation at Risk*. This dovetailed nicely with White House and congressional concerns during the 1980s and 1990s about the U.S. economy's fundamentals in an increasingly competitive world. Explicitly linking the American education system to the nation's economic health—economics being an area clearly in the federal government's domain—increased the license of federal officials to act in education. Thus, arguments about promoting excellence, in addition to equity, could now justify increased federal involvement.

In terms of policy production, federal aid dating to the first ESEA was one reason why states had the ability to increase their own involvement in education in serious ways. That was the explicit purpose of the original ESEA's Title V, which provided grants to strengthen state education agencies. Samuel Halperin, one of the law's architects, summarized some of its capacity building accomplishments by 1975:

> Such innovations as state planning and evaluation units have been added in 38 states; new educational data systems (26 states); assessment programs (28); training for planners and evaluators (33); improved management-by-objectives systems (13); multi-year educational plans (8); state-wide planning in programming-budgeting systems (7); improved evaluation methodologies (23); etc. In the words of the top

[33] Firestone (1990); Educational Testing Service Policy Information Center (1990).

> educational manager of one of the nation's largest states, "virtually every innovation we have undertaken in the past decade was either launched with or supported by [ESEA] Title V."[34]

Even though the states did not eventually commit enough of their own resources for capacity-building as Halperin would have liked,[35] it is clear that federal dollars flowing since the 1960s helped to build platforms from which states could launch reforms in the 1970s and 1980s. A parallel dynamic of federal support that buttressed state efforts, which also enabled subsequent deeper federal involvement in education, continued into the 1990s when Goals 2000 funds (from P.L. 103-227) helped states to develop their standards systems.

Thus, based on the evidence to this point and an understanding of relationships across the American federal system, the overall trajectory of federal education policy since 1965 has proceeded as follows. An activist federal government, unable to reach very deeply into the core functions of the nation's schools in the 1960s, prompted states to develop their capacity for education policymaking. As state capacity increased, coterminous with states' education finance reforms, states began to assert greater control of their education systems (relative to local districts) in the 1970s and 1980s. Through their activities, state leaders, especially governors, sustained the momentum that *A Nation at Risk* and similar state-sponsored reports produced. That helped the states to significantly undercut local control of education. As the 1980s concluded and state efforts built up steam, federal officials became better positioned to deepen their involvement in education than their predecessors had been in the 1960s. Because states had passed laws and reformed nearly all aspects of their education systems in the 1970s and 1980s, they created more levers that federal officials could pull with their own laws to attempt to promote both educational equity and excellence.

This account illustrates why federalism should be a central concern to analysts and scholars hoping to explain the development of federal education policy since 1965. In large part, federal involvement has proceeded from the back-and-forth interactions between policymakers at the state and federal level who have borrowed license and capacity from each other to build their respective education agendas. A close look at the ESEA's primary component, Title I, elaborates this point and extends the overall discussion of federal involvement to the present day.

Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act

The cornerstone of federal efforts to help the educationally disadvantaged has been Title I of the ESEA. How policymakers have periodically adjusted Title I to pursue this goal reflects how federal officials have pushed their own educational agendas by borrowing strength from the states.

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[34] Halperin (1975, p. 11). See also Advisory Council on State Departments of Education (1968), and Berke and Kirst (1972).

[35] In my interview with Halperin, he reflected that over the long run Title V did not live up to its promise because state governments never provided what he believed was enough money to bolster their departments of education. Moore, Goertz, and Hartle (1983) provides a more optimistic account. For more on federal financing of state education agencies, see General Accounting Office (1994).

In the original ESEA, the Congress gave Title I a rather cumbersome name.[36] Substantively, it declared that Title I was designed "to provide financial assistance (as set forth in this title) to local educational agencies serving areas with concentrations of children from low-income families to expand and improve their educational programs by various means (including preschool programs) which contribute particularly to meeting the special educational needs of educationally deprived children."[37]

Three things about that statement of policy are notable. First, the focus on disadvantaged students is clear, and consistent with a mission based on promoting equity. Second, the law would assist disadvantaged young people with educational programs that met their "special educational needs." Third, the key agents involved in executing these programs would be local school districts. Given that state education agencies were relatively immature bureaucracies in this period, federal policymakers were unable to leverage their meager capabilities as some, especially U.S. Commissioner of Education Francis Keppel, would have liked to do had it been possible. Building up state capacity (rather than borrowing it) was needed first, as the ESEA's Title V made clear.

The overall mission of Title I and its substantive name remained the same in the 1967, 1970, and 1974 ESEA reauthorizations. In 1978 (P.L. 95-561), Congress gave the title a more general overall label, calling it "Financial Assistance to Meet Special Educational Needs of Children." The opening half of Title I's declaration of policy appended a new sentence to the 1965 language, recognizing explicitly other "special educational needs of children" in addition to poverty. Section 101 specifically identified children of certain migrant parents, Indian children, and handicapped, neglected, and delinquent children. This version of law basically elaborated Title I's equity mission and continued to rely on local education agencies and a programmatic approach to accomplish it.

Even though it was not an explicit reauthorization of the ESEA, the educational block grants passed in 1981 as Title V, Subtitle D of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981 (P.L. 97-35) began to refocus Title I, now called Chapter 1, ever so slightly. Even though the title's overall name changed from the 1978 version,[38] its purpose continued to focus on the disadvantaged (identifying only low-income students specifically). The statement of purpose also included two changes. It stressed the need to decrease red tape that often accompanied federal programs, and it identified the states as a new agent, in addition to school districts, that would support Title I's aims. Section 552 described the states' role this way:

> The Congress declares it to be the policy of the United States to continue to provide financial assistance to State and local educational agencies to meet the special needs of educationally deprived children, on the basis of entitlements calculated under title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, but to do so in a manner which will eliminate burdensome, unnecessary, and unproductive paperwork and free schools of unnecessary Federal supervision, direction, and control.

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[36] It was called "Title I Financial Assistance to Local Educational Agencies for the Education of Children of Low-Income Families and Extension of Public Law 874, Eighty-First Congress."

[37] P.L. 89-10, Title I, Sec. 201.

[38] The name now read: "Chapter 1—Financial Assistance to Meet Special Educational Needs of Disadvantaged Students." That adjustment replaced the word "children" from P.L. 95-561 with "disadvantaged students."

This was the first time that the states appeared specifically in the statement of purpose of the federal government's main education program. Their inclusion was likely more a matter of philosophy than a specific policy vision for education reform, however, given the overall state-centered approach of Reagan's block grants.[39]

By the end of the 1980s, the states had firmly established themselves as education policy leaders. This was reflected in the ESEA reauthorization of 1988 (P.L. 100-297). In that law, Chapter 1 reverted back in name to Title I, and Congress also resurrected the language of P.L. 95-561 in this new law's purpose (Sec. 1001) by identifying specific types of disadvantaged students, in addition low-income children, that Title I would serve. Not only did the states appear explicitly in the title's statement of policy,[40] but the law also began to link academic performance of Title I students to state-defined achievement levels as a way to identify poorly performing schools.[41]

Congress also reframed the purpose of Title I programs in 1988. While they would still meet the particular needs of disadvantaged children, they also served the generic aim "to improve the educational opportunities of educationally deprived children by helping such children succeed in the regular program of the local educational agency, attain grade-level proficiency, and improve achievement in basic and more advanced skills."[42] Previously, Title I's rationale had never mentioned the general achievement of disadvantaged students. Neither had it identified them as members of their schools' regular academic programs. Past versions had focused on these students' particular educational needs, and the specific programs that could address them. Furthermore, the law recognized that programs targeted at entire schools, rather than disadvantaged populations alone, could be suitable for achieving Title I's aims.

This focus on achievement and a more developed state role intensified significantly in 1994 when the ESEA was reauthorized as the Improving America's Schools Act (P.L. 103-382). In this version, the adjustments to Title I were profound. The influence of the state standards movement, which had been brewing since the 1980s and had accelerated in the 1990s, was now reflected explicitly. Title I was renamed "Helping Disadvantaged Children Meet High Standards." Its opening general statement of policy was incredibly broad, and encompassed all students, not just the disadvantaged: "The Congress declares it to be the policy of the United States that a high-quality education *for all individuals* and a fair and equal opportunity to obtain that education are a societal good, are a moral imperative, and improve the life of every individual, because the quality of our individual lives ultimately depends on the quality of the lives of others."[43] That deepened federal involvement and implied that federal policy should properly address more than the educational needs of the disadvantaged, but of all students as well.

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[39] Anton (1989, p. 219).

[40] In part, the Congress declared "it to be the policy of the United States to provide financial assistance to State and local educational agencies to meet the special needs of such educationally deprived children at the preschool, elementary, and secondary levels." See P.L. 100-297, Title I, Chapter 1, Sec. 1001(a)(2)(A).

[41] Jennings (2001).

[42] P.L. 100-297, Title I, Chapter 1, Sec. 1001(b).

[43] P.L. 103-382, Title I, Sec. 1001(a)(1). My emphasis.

After beginning Title I with this general frame, Congress continued in Section 1001(b) with a "recognition of need" that highlighted some of the educational difficulties facing students of particular disadvantaged groups. First among these problems was the "sizable gap" in educational achievement that existed between the disadvantaged and other children. Section 1001(c), elaborated on what the nation had learned about education since 1988 (the last ESEA reauthorization year), and opened with a statement that all students, including those served by Title I, could meet high expectations.[44] Also apparent from educational research, the law maintained, was that supplemental programs for the disadvantaged were helpful, but that these students also needed access to "effective high-quality regular school programs."[45] Extending the 1988 ESEA, that meant using federal resources to improve entire schools, rather than focusing explicitly on programs for the disadvantaged, could go a long way toward achieving Title I's mission.

With those developments in 1994, what did Title I's overall mission become? The Congress made this explicit in its statement of policy, again highlighting the key role of the states: "The purpose of this title is to enable schools to provide opportunities for children served to acquire the knowledge and skills contained in the challenging State content standards and to meet the challenging State performance standards developed for all children."[46] That final part of Title I's opening section elaborated in 9 specific points how to accomplish this purpose. Testing, through state assessment systems, was an explicit part of this overall strategy and would measure "how well children served under this title are achieving challenging State student performance standards expected of all children."[47]

This new direction for Title I illustrates how federal education policy has simultaneously borrowed and built state capacity. Even though Title I was now linked to state standards and testing, in the early 1990s few states had completely developed operational and aligned systems of standards and tests that the ESEA would now rely upon. The 1994 ESEA recognized the direction that states were heading, however, and federal officials attempted to borrow strength with that future in mind. But federal policymakers also recognized that work remained to develop coherent curriculum standards and tests in all states. Addressing that need motivated the Clinton administration to propose the Goals 2000 Educate America Act (P.L. 103-227). Even though some conservatives labeled it a vast encroachment of federal power in the nation's schools, in practice the law basically provided states with free money to help them develop their standards systems.[48] That served multiple goals, such as supporting efforts already underway and prodding states that were slow to join the standards movement to accelerate their work.[49]

This new direction for Title I, which was linked to state standards and accountability systems, continued unabated in the ESEA reauthorization of 2001, known as the No Child Left Behind Act (P.L. 107-110). Title I received a new substantive name once again, but it still kept

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[44] P.L. 103-382, Title I, Sec. 1001(c)(1).
[45] P.L. 103-382, Title I, Sec. 1001(c)(4).
[46] P.L. 103-382, Title I, Sec. 1001(d).
[47] P.L. 103-382, Title I, Sec. 1001(d)(8).
[48] Interviews with Billie Orr and Gordon Ambach. See also Jennings (1998).
[49] Chronologically, Goals 2000 became law on March 31, 1994, while seven months later, on October 20, President Clinton signed into law the 1994 ESEA reauthorization, which contained the new version of Title I.

the same spirit that the 1994 law had articulated.[50] Its statement of purpose also mimicked the one present in the Improving America's Schools Act. Title I would "ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging State academic achievement standards, and state academic assessments."[51] Among the 12 specific points following that general statement, many also carried over from P.L. 103-382. Alex Medler, acting director of the public charter schools program at the U.S. Department of Education attested to this continuity and focus on standards. He identified to me the connection between the 1994 and 2001 reforms this way: "When [Clinton education secretary Richard] Riley and [acting undersecretary] Mike Smith were around you could have called the Department of Education the 'Department of High Standards and 40 Other Ideas.' What has followed has built on that. All of the things that have come along are moving in the same direction."

Alternative Explanations and Conclusions

Before concluding, it is worth addressing two plausible alternative explanations for the growth of federal involvement in education. First, it is reasonable to ask how the role of the U.S. Department of Education, created during President Jimmy Carter's term, aligns with this paper's account. Might it be that expanded federal involvement in education, and shifts in state and federal education policy generally, were more due to leadership from this new institution than the explanation based federal-state interactions and borrowing strength?

Based on the history of the law that created the department (P.L. 96-88), and the department's subsequent development, there is compelling evidence that it has followed more than led on policy matters. Simply put, overhauling the nation's education system or changing the substance of major federal programs did not motivate President Carter to create the department.[52] Rather, bureaucratic reorganization was the primary rationale. Much evidence supports this conclusion.

First, the Carter team lodged the effort to create the department in a broader initiative called the President's Reorganization Project (PRP), which was designed to foster efficiency and improve operations of many government agencies. Education was but one part of this overall reorganization effort. Second, despite his remarks at the ceremony where he signed P.L. 96-88 into law, Carter's own explanations for why the nation needed the department, which he offered both during the legislative process and in his memoirs, focused on organizational concerns.[53] Finally, some of the new department's supporters and members of Congress actually argued that this new federal agency would produce little policy change.[54]

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[50] It was now called Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged.

[51] P.L. 107-110, Title I, Sec. 1001.

[52] In an interview with me, Art Wise, a former Carter administration official whose "pen wrote most of the legislation, at least the first drafts," recalled this about the early stages of the process: "Other than saying that we should have an education department, the president and others behind it hadn't given much thought to what that actually meant."

[53] Stephens (1983-1984, p. 647); Carter (1982, p. 76).

[54] To minimize fears of growing federal control, the Senate committee that considered the bill in 1979 stated in its report that the new department "should not directly…improve American education. It is not intended to do so

Certainly, the new department did enhance the federal government's bully pulpit, and in turn, its license to act in education policy. Also, skilled education secretaries including William Bennett, Lamar Alexander, and Richard Riley used their cabinet-level status to promote reform ideas. However, to say that the department itself invented reforms, ensconced them in federal law or regulations, and distributed them widely, vastly overstates its impact. Throughout its history the department has primarily been a banker and an auditor, distributing and then monitoring expenditures of funds across many federal education programs. Other than providing a bully pulpit, that remains its primary mission to this day.[55]

The theory of punctuated equilibrium is a second alternative explanation that merits some discussion. This view holds that policy agendas tend to unfold incrementally, but are also subject to bursts of activity that produce new policy trajectories.[56] The federal role since 1965 appears to demonstrate features consistent with this model, especially if one considers the release of *A Nation at Risk* in 1983 and the Charlottesville education summit in 1989 as inflection points that expanded federal involvement in the nation's schools. Because the previous pages have addressed *A Nation at Risk* in some detail, let me conclude here with the impact of Charlottesville.

The national education summit of 1989 is indeed an important event in American educational history. President George H. W. Bush's goal in calling the summit was to have the nation's governors share education success stories and exchange ideas. Even though they were interested in the summit, the governors resisted this relatively simple agenda given that it was something they did at other forums during the year. Using the summit to develop support for national education goals was their preferred approach.[57] That would help to mobilize the federal government behind their efforts, both financially and rhetorically, and it would allow the governors to firmly establish their influence over the future direction of the nation's education policy.

The top education staff person at the National Governors' Association (NGA), Michael Cohen, developed these ideas in a memo to governors in advance of the summit.[58] Cohen's recommendation was perhaps not surprising given that states, through the NGA and regional organizations such as the Southern Regional Education Board's Commission for Educational Quality (chaired by South Carolina governor and future federal education secretary Richard Riley) had developed their own goals statements in the latter half of the 1980s.[59] At

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because that is really the province and duty of the States and localities." Quoted in Stephens (1983-1984, p. 654). See also Radin and Hawley (1988, p. 218).

[55] Interviews with Jack Jennings, Alex Medler, and Gerald Tirozzi.

[56] Baumgartner and Jones (1993).

[57] Interview with Michael Cohen. See also, Vinovskis (1999, p. 26)

[58] Part of Cohen's memo, cited in Vinovskis (1999, p. 26) read: "The proposal [of focusing on goals and targets] also has the potential for enormous payoff. For education, it can build and focus public attention and support, and help ensure that existing resources are most effectively utilized. It can help ensure that federal and state policies are appropriately altered along the lines already established by the Governors. *And, it ensures that the governors will remain a dominant force in education policy for the foreseeable future, at both the state and federal levels*" (my emphasis).

[59] Vinovskis (1999, p. 21).

Charlottesville, the governors, led in part by Bill Clinton of Arkansas, convinced President Bush and his representatives to pursue this path. They left Virginia promising to develop national education goals. While that result pleased the governors, it startled some inside the Bush administration, which implies that the White House was following rather than leading on the goals issue.[60]

The summit, then, did represent an inflection point and a shift in federal involvement, which is consistent with the theory of punctuated equilibrium. A simple chronology of events focused on the machinations of federal policymakers, however, obscures the causal forces that produced this outcome. Introducing the states' role, which includes their critical pre-1989 activities during what one report called "the education reform decade,"[61] clarifies the history and mechanisms that helped to guide the federal education agenda in the 1990s and beyond when it became tightly linked to state systems of standards and testing.

* * *

Overall, this paper shows how federal policy entrepreneurs have fostered capacity-building and borrowed strength from the states to expand Washington's involvement in the nation's schools. That is its primary empirical contribution. Additionally, the theoretical model offered here illustrates how studying federal policy change by examining state and federal agendas simultaneously can realize some of the gains that Kingdon anticipated when he explained why federalism deserved more explicit attention in agenda studies. Finally, the approach based on borrowing strength demonstrates how appreciating multiple developments at the federal and state levels, and carefully studying the timing and sequencing of events can reveal general patterns of agenda change in what sometimes appears to be a disorderly American federal system.

Appendix on Interview Data

With only a few exceptions, I conducted all of these interviews in person. They ranged in length, but most lasted approximately 40 minutes. I took handwritten notes and then, immediately after the interview whenever possible, typed them up to reconstruct a transcript of the discussion.

Table A1 about here

[60] For example, Milton Goldberg, who at this time was an education official under President Bush and one of the administration officials who would help develop the goals, remarked in his interview with me about a call he received from the administration about creating national education goals: "I said, 'Are you crazy!' Given the ideological polarization in the country at the time I couldn't see it happening."

[61] Educational Testing Service Policy Information Center (1990).

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Figure 1. A model of agenda formation.

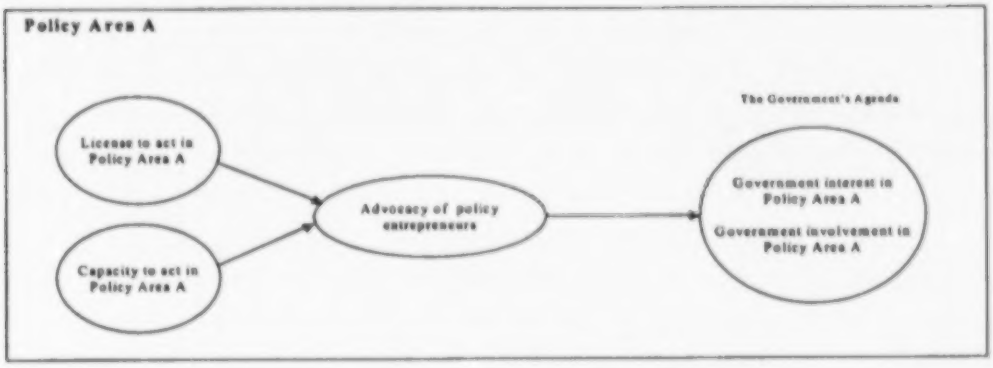
Policy Area A
License to act in Policy Area A
Capacity to act in Policy Area A
Advocacy of policy entrepreneurs
The Government's Agenda
Government interest in Policy Area A
Government involvement in Policy Area A

Figure 2. Agenda formation in a federal system.

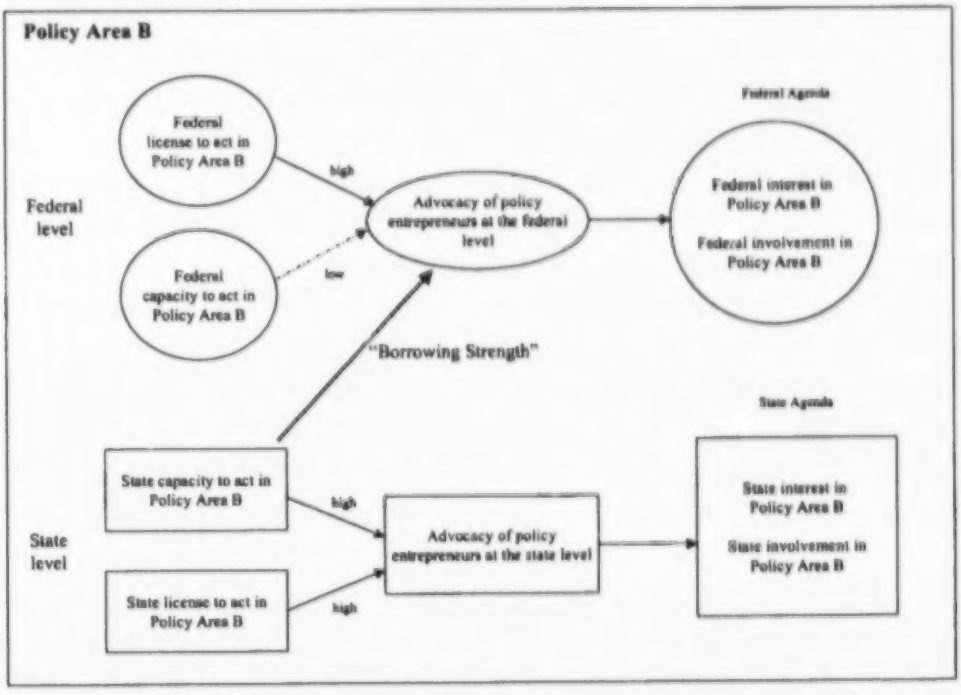
Policy Area B
Federal license to act in Policy Area B
high
Federal level
Federal capacity to act in Policy Area B
low
Advocacy of policy entrepreneurs at the federal level
Federal Agenda
Federal interest in Policy Area B
Federal involvement in Policy Area B
"Borrowing Strength"
State Agenda
State capacity to act in Policy Area B
high
State level
State license to act in Policy Area B
high
Advocacy of policy entrepreneurs at the state level
State interest in Policy Area B
State involvement in Policy Area B

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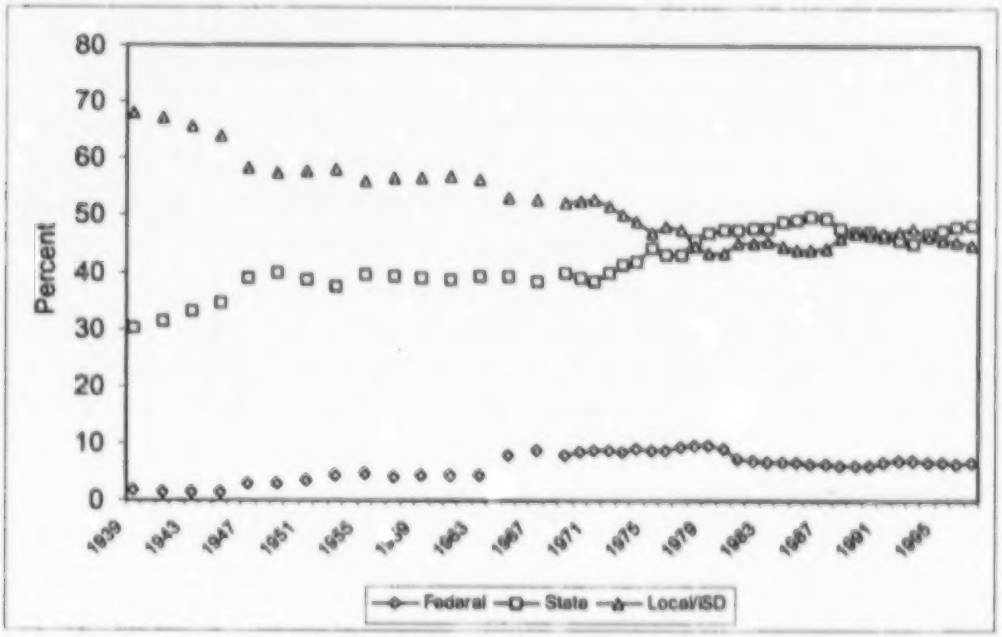
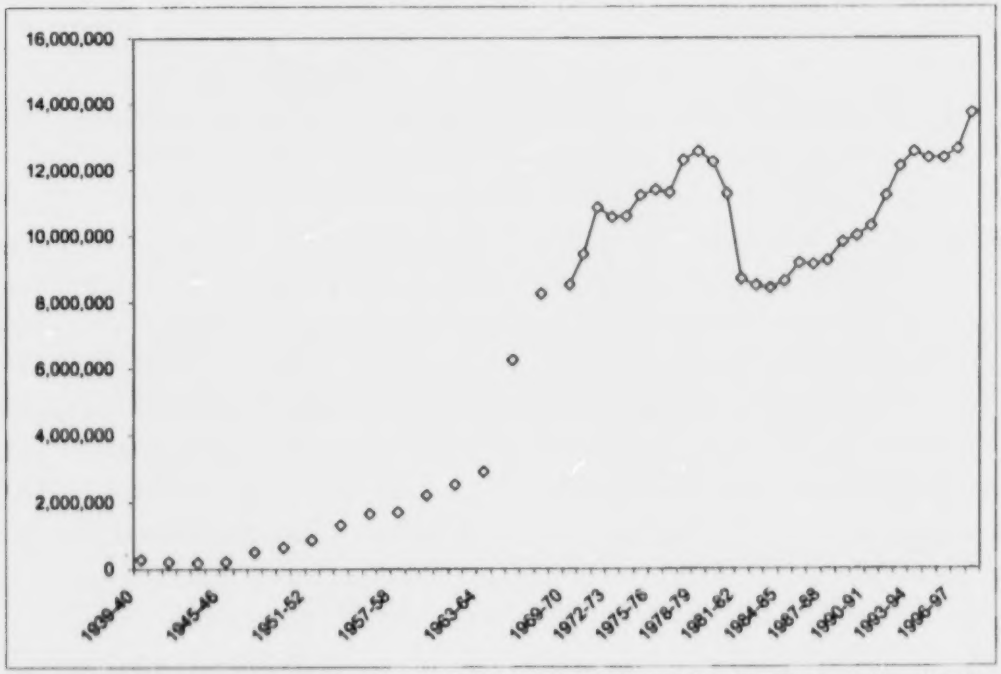
Figure 3. Revenues for K-12 education by source of funds, school year beginning 1939-40 to 1997-98



Source: National Center for Education Sta' stics (2001, Table 158).

Figure 4. Federal spending on K-12 education in 1000s of real dollars, 1939-1998.



Source: Author's calculation from National Center for Education Statistics (2001), Table 158, adjusted based on the education price index in Table 37.
Note: Base years for the education price index, which is the consumer price index adjusted to a school year basis (July through June) are 1982-84.

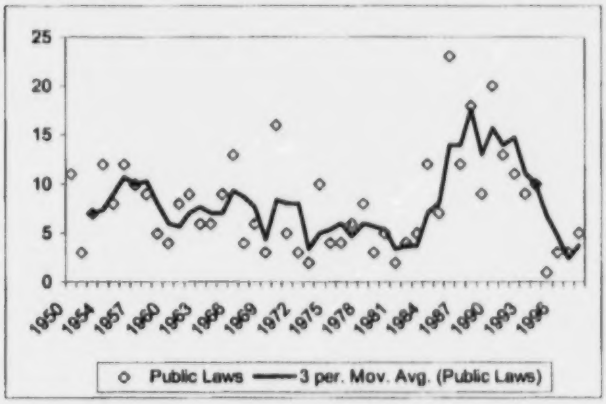
Table 1. Federal spending as percent of total revenues for K-12 education in a state.

	Number of states	
Federal contribution within a state	1967-68	1996-97
0 to 4.9%	2	9
5 to 9.9	25	36
10 to 14.9	14	5
15 to 19.9	6	0
20 to 24.9	3	0

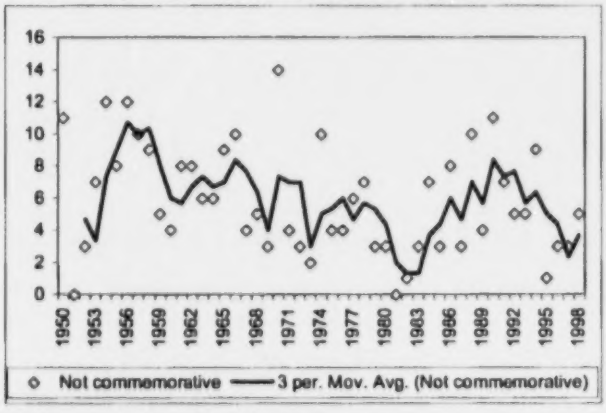
Source: Author's calculation using National Center for Education Statistics (1970, Table 69) and National Center for Education Statistics (2001, Table 160).

Figure 5. Public laws addressing K-12 education, 1950-1998.

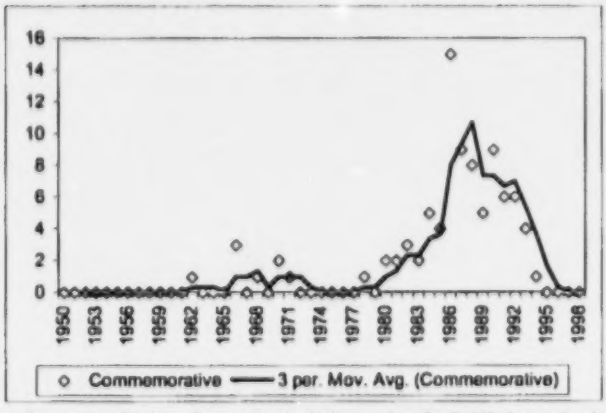
A. All laws.



B. Non-commemorative (substantive) laws.



C. Commemorative laws.



Source: Author's coding and calculations using the Public Laws databases of the Policy Agendas Project at the University of Washington. The data used here were originally collected with the support of National Science Foundation. Neither NSF nor the original collectors of the data bear any responsibility for the analysis in this paper.

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Table A1. Interview respondents.

Respondent	Position at time of interview	Date of interview
Gordon Ambach	Executive Director (Retired), Council of Chief State School Officers	Jan. 25, 2002
John Barth	Acting Executive Director, National Education Goals Panel	Nov. 2, 2001
Buzz Bartlett	President and Chief Executive Officer, Council for Basic Education	Jan. 30, 2001
Lisa Bos	Education Reform Project Director, Republican Study Committee, US House	Mar. 1, 2002
Michael Cohen	Senior Fellow, Aspen Institute	Oct. 23, 2001
Christopher Cross	Immediate past President and Chief Executive Officer, Council for Basic Education	Jan. 15, 2002
Charles (Chuck) Edwards	Senior Editor, *Title I Monitor* and *Title I Handbook*	Oct. 11, 2001
Elizabeth Fay	Legislative Assistant, Sen. Evan Bayh (D-IN)	Feb. 21, 2002
Milton Goldberg	Executive Vice President, National Alliance of Business	Dec. 11, 2001
Siobhan Gorman	Reporter, *National Journal*	June 11 and Oct. 4, 2001
Mark Graul	Chief of Staff, Rep. Mark Green (R-WI)	June 13, 2001
Dana Gray	Legislative Assistant, Rep. Lynn Rivers (D-MI)	June 7, 2001
David Griffith	Director of Governmental and Public Affairs, National Association of State Boards of Education	March 26, 2002
Kara Haas	Legislative Assistant, Rep. Michael Castle (R-DE)	June 14, 2001
Samuel Halperin	Founder and Senior Fellow, American Youth Policy Forum	Jan. 22, 2002
Janet Hansen	Vice President and Director of Education Studies, Committee for Economic Development	Dec. 12, 2001
Kati Haycock	Director, The Education Trust	Feb. 6, 2002
Carnie Hayes	Director of Federal-State Relations, Council of Chief State School Officers	Oct. 19, 2001
Bruce Hunter	Associate Executive Director for Public Policy, American Association of School Administrators	Oct. 30, 2001
Nathalia Jaramillo	Consultant, Council of the Great City Schools	Nov. 27, 2001
John (Jack) Jennings	Founder and Director, Center on Education Policy	Dec. 5, 2001
Craig Jerald	Senior Policy Analyst, The Education Trust	June 7, 2001
Krista Kafer	Senior Policy Analyst, Heritage Foundation	Dec. 20, 2001
Michael Kennedy	Legislative Assistant, Rep. Thomas Petri (R-WI)	June 12, 2001
Victor Klatt	Vice President, Van Scoyoc Associates	Nov. 12, 2001
Erika Lestelle	Legislative Assistant, Rep. Bob Schaffer (R-CO)	Mar. 15, 2002
Dane Linn	Director of the Education Policy Studies Division, Center for Best Practices, National Governors' Association	Nov. 1, 2001

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Table A1. (continued)

Sally Lovejoy	Director of Education and Human Resources Policy, Committee on Education and the Workforce (Republican staff), US House	June 13, 2001
Jay Mathews	Staff Writer, *Washington Post*	June 13, 2001
Jeff Mazur	Legislative Assistant, Rep. Ron Kind (D-WI)	June 6, 2001
Alex Medler	Acting Director, Public Charter Schools Program, US Department of Education	May 30 and June 15, 2001
Alex Nock	Legislative Associate, Committee on Education and the Workforce (Democratic staff), US House	Feb. 19, 2002
Billie Orr	President, Education Leaders Council	Feb. 14, 2002
Joel Packer	Lobbyist, National Education Association	Mar. 25, 2002
Shawn Pfaff	Graduate student, La Follette Institute of Public Affairs, University of Wisconsin-Madison	Apr. 24, 2001
Kris Pratt	Legislative Director, Rep. Tammy Baldwin (D-WI)	June 11, 2001
Jacqueline Raphael	Research Associate, Education Policy Center, Urban Institute	June 8, 2001
Diane Stark Rentner	Associate Director, Center on Education Policy	June 7, 2001
Michael Resnick	Associate Executive Director, National School Boards Association	Dec. 10, 2001
Andrew Rotherham	Director, 21st Century Schools Project, Progressive Policy Institute	Oct. 5, 2001
Jorge Ruiz-de-Velasco	Research Associate, Education Policy Center, Urban Institute	June 8, 2001
Cheryl Sattler	Editor, *Title I Monitor* and *Title I Handbook*	Oct. 11, 2001
David Shreve	Program and Committee Director for Education, Labor, and Job Training, National Conference of State Legislatures	Nov. 21, 2001
Mike Sommers	Legislative Director, Rep. John Boehner (R-OH)	June 7, 2001
Gerald (Jerry) Sroufe	Director of Government Relations, American Educational Research Association	Oct. 23, 2001
Michele Stockwell	Legislative Assistant, Sen. Joseph Lieberman (D-CT)	Feb. 19, 2002
Kathleen Strottman	Legislative Assistant, Sen. Mary Landrieu (D-LA)	June 8, 2001
Jerry Tirozzi	Executive Director, National Association of Secondary School Principals	Dec. 21, 2001
Thomas Toch	Writer in Residence, National Center on Education and the Economy	Jan. 15 and Jan. 23, 2002
Susan Traiman	Director, Education Initiative, Business Roundtable	Feb. 4, 2002
Michael Usdan	Senior Fellow, Institute for Educational Leadership	Nov. 14, 2001
Dustin Valerius	Education Policy Analyst, Education Leaders Council	June 15, 2001
Courtney Weise	Legislative Director, Rep. Jim DeMint (R-SC)	Mar. 4, 2002
Art Wise	President, National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education	Dec. 7, 2001
Donna Wong	Budget Analyst, Congressional Budget Office	June 13, 2001

Note: Two additional respondents wished to remain anonymous.

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